

Mandatory licensing of home inspectors coming

On March 31, 2009, BC will become the first Canadian province requiring home inspectors to be licensed.

For the past decade, together with BC Real Estate Association, your Board has advocated that home inspectors meet licensing and uniform education standards.

Members were concerned that training for inspectors was voluntary and anyone could call themselves a home inspector. This created problems for homebuyers who hired “professional” home inspectors who ultimately weren’t qualified. When problems were discovered that an inspector should have identified, the homebuyer had no recourse.

Under the new standards, the province’s 300 to 400 home inspectors will be required to meet the qualifications of one of the following organizations:

- the Canadian Association of Home & Property Inspectors – BC branch;
- the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of British Columbia; or
- the National Certification Program for Home and Property Inspectors.

Licensing will be under the *Business Practices and Consumer Protection Act*. Home inspectors must complete examinations and field experience, undergo a criminal records check and pay a \$100 licensing fee.

The Business Practices and Consumer Protection Authority (BPCPA) will be the regulatory body, overseeing licensing and complaints, and will monitor compliance through inspections and enforcement. Maximum penalties for non compliance will be \$5,000.

Licensing information and application forms will be posted on the BPCPA website at www.bpcpa.ca by February 27, 2009.

Until March 31, 2009, home inspectors who haven’t met the requirements of a BPCPA-recognized professional association or authority can apply to the BPCPA to have their experience, knowledge and ability assessed and may be issued a licence. “Grandfathered” inspectors must meet the requirements of one of the three recognized groups by March 31, 2011.

Questions have been raised about whether the new standards will prove ad-

equate. Discussions between the government and the inspection industry organizations are ongoing.

See the licence

After March 31, 2009, when you provide a list of home inspectors to your clients, make sure each inspector has a wallet-sized licence and make sure your clients ask to see it.

If your clients have a complaint about a licensed inspector they can visit the BPCPA website at www.bpcpa.ca or phone toll-free 1.888.564.9963 for assistance.

Most frequent house problems found by home inspectors

1. **Improper surface grading/drainage:** Results in water penetration in the basement or crawl space.
2. **Improper electrical wiring:** Includes insufficient electrical service to the house, inadequate overload protection, and amateur, often dangerous, wiring connections.
3. **Roof damage:** Includes old or damaged shingles or improper flashing which cause water leakage.
4. **Heating systems:** Includes broken or malfunctioning operation controls, blocked chimneys and unsafe exhaust disposal.
5. **Poor overall maintenance:** Includes cracked, peeling, or dirty painted surfaces, crumbling masonry, makeshift wiring or plumbing, and broken fixtures or appliances.
6. **Structure-related problems:** Includes damage to foundation walls, floor joists, rafters, and window and door headers.
7. **Plumbing:** Includes old or incompatible piping materials, faulty fixtures and waste lines.
8. **Exterior flaws:** Includes inadequate caulking and/or weather stripping on windows, doors, and wall surfaces which leads to water and air penetration.
9. **Poor ventilation:** includes over-sealed homes which result in excessive interior moisture that causes rotting and premature failure of structural and non-structural elements.

Source: *The Canadian Association of Home and Property Inspectors*